

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1. A method of monitoring a container associated with an item, comprising:  
2           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
3           arranging for ownership of the item to be transferred based on the indication.

1           2. The method of claim 1, wherein ownership is transferred to at least one of: (i)  
2           a person who opened the container, and (ii) a party associated with the container.

1           3. The method of claim 1, wherein said arranging comprises:  
2           arranging for a party to provide payment in exchange for the item based on the  
3           indication.

1           4. The method of claim 3, wherein the payment is associated with at least one of:  
2           (i) a purchase, (ii) a license, (iii) a loan, and (iv) a rental.

1           5. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving comprises:  
2           receiving a signal generated by a remote transmitting device.

1           6. The method of claim 5, wherein the transmitting device does not transmit a  
2           signal when the container is subsequently re-opened.

1           7. The method of claim 5, wherein the transmitting device is associated with at  
2           least one of: (i) a radio transmitter, (ii) a photosensitive device, (iii) a pressure sensitive  
3           device, (iv) a conductive element attached to an enclosure, (v) a seal having a conductive

4 element, (vi) a seal having a non-conductive element, and (vii) a flexible printed circuit  
5 board device.

1 8. The method of claim 5, wherein said receiving comprises receiving the signal  
2 at a controller via a communication device.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the indication includes at least one of: (i) a  
2 party identifier, (ii) an item identifier, (iii) an item category, (iv) a container identifier, (v)  
3 a date, (vi) a time, and (vii) location information.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the indication is received via at least one of:  
2 (i) a wireless network, (ii) an Internet protocol network, (iii) a Bluetooth network, and  
3 (iv) a cellular network.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 providing the container to a party without receiving payment in exchange for the  
3 item.

1 12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:  
2 arranging for the party to provide security deposit information.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the security deposit information comprises  
2 at least one of: (i) a credit card number, (ii) a debit card number, (iii) a bank account  
3 number, (iv) digital payment protocol information, and (v) an address.

1           14. The method of claim 1, wherein the item comprises at least one of: (i) a  
2 consumer item, (ii) a consumable item, (iii) paper, (iv) toner, (v) energy, (vi) food, (vii) a  
3 medical item, (viii) medicine, (ix) disposable contact lenses, (x) a software program, (xi)  
4 an entertainment item, (xii) text information, (xiii) audio information, (xiv) image  
5 information, (xv) an information storage item, (xvi) a regulated item, and (xvii) a  
6 financial item.

1           15. The method of claim 1, wherein the container comprises at least one of: (i) a  
2 package, (ii) a wrapper, (iii) a box, (iv) a bag, (v) a bottle, (vi) a can, (vii) an envelope,  
3 (viii) a label, (ix) a tag, and (x) a tie.

1           16. A computer implemented method of monitoring a disposable package  
2 containing a consumable item, comprising:  
3           providing the disposable package to a consumer without receiving payment in  
4 exchange for the consumable item;  
5           receiving an indication that the disposable package has been opened; and  
6           arranging for the consumer to provide payment in exchange for the consumable  
7 item based on the indication.

1           17. An apparatus, comprising:  
2           a processor; and  
3           a storage device in communication with said processor and storing instructions  
4 adapted to be executed by said processor to:  
5           receive an indication that a container has been opened, and  
6           arrange for ownership of an item associated with the container to be  
7 transferred based on the indication.

1           18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said storage device further stores a  
2 container status database.

1           19. The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising:  
2 a communication device coupled to said processor and adapted to communicate  
3 with at least one of: (i) a container, (ii) a local device, (iii) a controller, and (iv) a  
4 payment device. /

1           20. A medium storing instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to  
2 perform a method of monitoring a container associated with an item, said method  
3 comprising:  
4 receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
5 arranging for ownership of the item to be transferred based on the indication.

1           21. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2 comprising:  
3 receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4 arranging for another item to be provided based on the indication.

1           22. The method of claim 21, wherein said arranging comprises arranging for  
2 another item to be provided to at least one of: (i) a party associated with the container, (ii)  
3 an owner of the container, (iii) a person who opened the container, and (iv) a destination  
4 associated with the container.

1           23. The method of claim 22, wherein the party has access to a plurality of  
2 containers and said arranging is performed after a pre-determined number of indications  
3 are received.

1           24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:  
2 determining a rate of usage based on the indication.

1           25. The method of claim 24, wherein the rate of usage is associated with at least  
2 one of: (i) a party associated with the container, (ii) an owner of the container, (iii) a  
3 person who opened the container, and (iv) a destination associated with the container.

1           26. The method of claim 24, further comprising:  
2 reporting the rate of usage to a party associated with the container.

1           27. The method of claim 26, wherein said reporting is performed at least one of:  
2 (i) periodically, (ii) a single time, (iii) when the rate of usage is less than a minimum pre-  
3 determined threshold amount, and (iv) when the rate of usage is more than a pre-  
4 determined maximum threshold amount.

1           28. The method of claim 21, wherein the indication comprises at least one of: (i)  
2 an indication of a number of containers that have been opened, and (ii) an indication of a  
3 number of containers remaining.

1           29. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2 comprising:  
3           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4           determining item quality information based on the indication.

1           30. The method of claim 29, wherein said determining is based on the date the  
2 indication was received.

1           31. The method of claim 30, wherein said determining is further based on a date  
2 associate with at least one of: (i) creation of the item, (ii) packaging of the item, (iii) sale  
3 of the item, and (iv) delivery of the item.

1           32. The method of claim 29, further comprising:  
2 transmitting an indication of the item quality information.

1           33. The method of claim 32, wherein the indication of the item quality  
2 information is transmitted to at least one of: (i) a party associated with the container, (ii)  
3 an owner of the container, (iii) a person who opened the container, and (iv) a destination  
4 associated with the container.

1           34. The method of claim 32, wherein the indication is transmitted at least one of:  
2 (i) periodically, (ii) a single time, and (iii) when the item quality information is less than a  
3 pre-determined minimum item quality.

1           35. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2 comprising:  
3           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4           determining item warranty information based on the indication.

1           36. The method of claim 35, wherein the item warranty information comprises an  
2 effective date based on the date the container was opened by a consumer.

1           37. The method of claim 35, wherein the warranty information is associated with  
2 a return policy.

1           38. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2 comprising:  
3           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4           determining security information based on the indication.

1           39. The method of claim 38, wherein the security information is associated with  
2 at least one of: (i) tampering, (ii) theft, and (iii) an insurance policy.

1           40. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item sent from  
2 a sender to a destination party, comprising:  
3           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4           arranging for the sender to receive a notification based on the indication.

1           41. The method of claim 40, wherein said arranging comprises:  
2           transmitting the notification to the sender when the indication is received.

1           42. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2    comprising:  
3           receiving an indication that the container has been opened; and  
4           recording the indication as an acceptance of an agreement associated with the  
5    item.

1           43. The method of claim 42, wherein the item is associated with a software  
2    program and the agreement comprises a license to use the software program.

1           44. A method of monitoring a remote container associated with an item,  
2    comprising:  
3           receiving a signal indicating that the container has been opened, the signal being  
4           generated by a transmitting device that does not transmit a signal when the container is  
5           subsequently re-opened; and  
6           verifying that the container was opened in accordance with an item requirement.

1           45. The method of claim 44, further comprising:  
2           transmitting an alert if the container was not opened in accordance with the item  
3    requirement.



1           46. The method of claim 45, wherein the alert is transmitted to at least one of: (i)  
2 a person who opened the container, (ii) a party associated with the item, and (iii) a third  
3 party.

1           47. The method of claim 44, wherein the item is associated with a medical  
2 treatment program.

1           48. A container, comprising:  
2 an enclosure; and  
3 a transmitting device adapted to transmit a signal when the enclosure is opened,  
4 wherein the transmitting device does not transmit a signal when the enclosure is  
5 subsequently re-opened.

1           49. The container of claim 48, wherein the enclosure comprises at least one of: (i)  
2 a package, (ii) a wrapper, (iii) a box, (iv) a bag, (v) a bottle, (vi) a can, (vii) an envelope,  
3 (viii) a label, (ix) a tag, and (x) a tie.

1           50. The container of claim 48, wherein the transmitting device is associated with  
2 at least one of: (i) radio transmitter, (ii) a photosensitive device, (iii) a pressure sensitive  
3 device, (iv) a conductive element attached to the enclosure, (v) a seal having a conductive  
4 element, (vi) a seal having a non-conductive element, (vii) a disposable transmitter, and  
5 (viii) a flexible printed circuit board device.

1           51. The container of claim 48, wherein the transmitting device does not transmit  
2 the signal if a pre-determined number of other containers are present.